

THE PLAY TROUPE of PORT WASHINGTON

Annual Report to Shockmolders

December, 1949

THAT CHRISTMAS PARTY comes on Saturday night, Dec. 17, at 8 PM at the Oddfellows Hall. The Steering Committee, in solemn conclave (?) assembled Nov. 30, decided to ask Helen and Alex Murdoch to handle the evening's program, which among other things is now scheduled to include several sessions of "The Game". If any group can play the latter, our group of trained seals should be tops. As usual, Dick Geruso will take time from his doctor's degree campaign to set the stage and a certain anonymous, but show-stopping, scrubwoman will handle refreshments. Come one, come all -- we're going to sing some carols and such, too.

I Remember Drama

By now, you've all seen the review of the play in the local paper and know "I Remember Mama" was an artistic, scenic, and (for a change) financial, triumph. With such figures as I have now, it looks as if the play cost us \$685 and our two houses totaled \$835, and the post-Saturday party \$12.23, leaving a net of \$132.50. Details are shown in a later table, but I want to point out that this is the biggest house we've ever had, and a profit second only to that on "Blithe Spirit" a year ago. And this is without considering the Annie Oakleys of members, many of whom came both nights. Members' admissions were something over 200, which at a buck apiece allocation from dues would add that much to profit. Also of interest in the figures is the number of junior admissions-- 214 at 90 cents each. Cliff Dunnells figures the total audience was something like 1050 people. And publicity brought 330 people to buy tickets at the door.

Older members have no doubt noticed the change in character of the Play Troupe. I have talked about it to many of you, but I doubt if more than a half dozen have ever seen the figures on which I base my opinion. It seems to me that what was for many years a small group has become a community institution, so that we have taken on new responsibilities as our audiences have grown. We must now weigh our possible desire to put on an experimental or "challenging" play against the potential disappointment of an audience expecting to see a "normal" play. Our hands aren't tied, but we've got to keep them clean.

Gren Anderson, before he moved to New Jersey, passed along to me a resumé of the balance sheet for the years 1936 to 1941. I was startled by several things it showed, among them the relatively smaller membership, the low operating costs and the consistent loss on productions, some of which were top-quality shows like "Our Town," "You Can't Take It With You" and "Beggar on Horseback." The figures show slow, but steady, improvement in our position, broadening activity--but we still risk our whole kitty on every show because of cost rises. Here are the figures summarized:

Season	'36-'37	'37-'38	'38-'39	'39-'40	'40-'41	'41-'42	'47-'48	'48-'49	'49-'50
Fall Net									
Worth	\$ 82.59	\$198.17	\$168.42	\$216.44	\$178.21	\$179.21	\$350.79	\$519.52	\$614.26
Members'									
Dues	471.00	393.00	352.00	340.00	320.00	?	357.50	400.00	
TOTAL	553.59	591.17	520.42	556.44	498.21		708.29	919.52	
Expenses									
Plays	229.96	333.58	217.13	273.16	251.26	125.00	442.39	36.60	
Readings	28.26	58.88	55.84	59.05	31.65	?	191.37	140.95	
Other	97.20	30.29	31.01	46.02	36.09	?	39.79	127.71	
TOTAL	355.42	422.75	303.98	378.23	319.00		188.77	305.26	
Change in									
Worth	/115.58	-29.75	/48.02	-38.23	/1.00	?	/168.73	/94.74	

NOTES: "Readings" did not exist before 1939; expenses listed are for parties. No meeting place was rented until Fall, 1947; hence increase in meeting cost thereafter. Large "Other" item in 1948-49 due to setting up historian, donations, etc.

NOW take a look at the profit-and-loss statements on thirteen years of productions:

Production	Date	Income	Expenses	Net
The Ivory Door	Fall, '36	\$140.05	\$357.46	-\$217.41
Ghost Train	Spr, '37	80.80	200.35	- 119.55
Three 1-Act	Fall, '37	86.00	195.08	- 109.08
Trelawney o'Wells	Spr, '38	107.50	344.49	- 236.99
Three 1-Act	Wint, '38	?	?	- 33.62
Whistling in Dark	Fall, '38	87.95	150.92	- 62.97
Best Years	Wint, '38	95.75	153.86	- 58.11
Our Town	Spr, '39	144.65	229.41	- 84.76
Two Groups 1-Act	Wint, '39	?	?	- 103.74
Our Town (Repeat)	Fall, '39	?	?	- 75.00 (Rental Parish Hall)
Beggar on Horseback	Spr, '40	145.75	230.17	- 84.42 (\$0.75 admission)
Excursion	Fall, '40	104.55	205.41	- 100.86 "
Two Groups 1-Act	Wint, '40	?	?	- 76.14
Spring Meeting	Spr, '41	100.50	174.76	- 74.26 "
You Can't Take It	Fall, '41	132.00	257.00	- 125.00
My Sister Eileen		No record		
Devil & Dan'l Web.		No record		
Dear Brutus	Spr., '47	360.00	270.99	/ 89.01
Ladies of the Jury	Wint. '47	492.00	374.97	/ 117.23 (Actually in Jan., '48)
Berkeley Square	Spr, '48	379.00	451.11	- 72.11
Blithe Spirit	Fall, '48	490.70	341.37	/ 149.33
Christmas Carol	Wint, '48	0	82.01	- 82.01 (Given twice; no charge)
Wizard of Oz	Feb., '49	48.50	15.16	/ 33.34 (See note below)
Pursuit of Happiness	May, '49	603.65	713.09	- 109.44
I Remember Mama	Fall, '49	834.65	690.23	/ 132.19 (Tentative)

On Wizard of Oz, we were presented two makeup kits (shown under income), purchased a black drop for the cost of the dyeing and paid for Kodachromes for our history. Expense items on all recent shows include cost of the members' party afterwards.

WHAT DOES IT COST TO PUT ON A PLAY?

Have you asked that question? Well, here are the figures on six plays; worth studying:

	Dear Brutus	Ladies o' Jury	Berkel. Square	Blithe Spirit	Pursuit of Hap.	I Remem. Mama
Admissions Tax	\$106.12	\$ 83.00	\$ 68.50	\$ 85.13	\$108.40	\$147.00
School Rental	50.00	88.00	100.25	61.00	72.75	100.00
Royalty	37.50	50.00	45.00	50.00	40.00	75.00
Scripts	5.22	20.60	?	10.41	14.23	26.88
Scenery	12.26	16.43	55.97	19.34	44.06	36.56
Props, Sound	13.97	20.30	28.92	21.90	14.19	17.17
Lighting	0	10.28	0	0	1.85	6.15
Costumes	10.00	0	86.37	17.59	82.10	66.80
Makeup & Wigs	4.57	2.04	29.40	0	9.58	6.00
Publicity & Adv.	1.75	2.50	10.50	42.51	155.66	107.67
Program	0	30.00	0	0	50.00	40.00
Tickets & Postage	7.00	5.20	4.20	10.67	89.23	41.00
Miscellaneous	22.60	24.05	24.00	10.00	18.85	20.00
TOTAL	270.99	352.40	451.11	328.55	700.90	690.23

Dear Ladies Berkel. Blithe Pursuit I Remem.
Brutus o' Jury Square Spirit of Hap. Mama

Performances	2	1	2	1	2	2
Admission Price	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.20	\$1.20
Receipts	\$360.00	\$492.00	\$379.00	\$490.70	\$603.65	\$834.65
NET	89.01	117.23	-72.11	149.33	-109.44	137.59 (Refreshments subd)
Refreshments	0	22.37	0	12.82	12.19	12.23

All figures of "I Remember Mama" are tentative. Recent props charges include \$10 insurance. Program and publicity costs for some shows were low or nil because members got discounts or gifts from printer friends; Ed King did on "Brutus;" I did on "Blithe Spirit" and "Christmas Carol," but we now feel we shouldn't invite charity. In many cases, lighting, costume and similar expenditures become permanent possessions of the Troupe, cutting costs of future productions.

My fingers (index and middle) are worn sore from typing, but I wanted to mention several short things. First, has anyone any ideas about a potential storeroom for our costumes, properties, paints and such like? At the moment, costumes are mostly at Fleurette Withers', with some in Cedric's attic; I have the black drop and the current makeup; Ed King has all the electrical stuff and the copies of old plays; Ed Bostick has our sound-record library; George Wiley has some hardware and paints; Marie Dunnells has old makeup stuff, and other things are Heaven knows where. We are getting to the point at which we should rent an inexpensive storeroom for this stuff, both to preserve it and to remove from members the fire danger it represents. If we can find something good, it may also provide a costume workroom.

Steering Committee feels our schedule is too full to become involved in a possible 1-act play competition with the Little Club of Manhasset and the Roslyn group. This decision may be changed later, but as of now, we can't see our way clear. We're planning to do "Alice in Wonderland," the biggest show we've attacked recently, with the Main Street School & Home at the end of February, and have our own Spring Show late in May. A 1-acter stuck in at the end of March would break our backs--if they aren't broken already.

George Wiley and Ed Bostick are a committee of two to consult with the School Board or its architects about the arrangement of the auditorium in the new high school, if they will let us. Maybe they'd welcome our help, and we'd sure welcome improved stage facilities.

As a result of yeoman reorganization by Cliff Dunnells, we now have a mailing list of 650 names for future productions, alphabetized and checked against latest directories. We're also nominating Jill Parker for the American Society of Heaven-Sent Angels for the job she did on short notice in collecting props for Mama. Did you notice that there was no makeup committee? We didn't have the people to spare, so the actors made themselves up, with some assistance for the juniors from other actors. Also, did you notice we had a trained stage crew? Had to-- so dratted many scene changes and light cues that they had to be rehearsed just like the action--and with it.

The Manhasset Little Club is putting on "Dream Girl" this Friday and Saturday night, December 9 and 10, at the Manhasset High School. Tickets are \$1.50.

Cedric and Hester Crowell staged a soiree for cast and crew of Mama on the Sunday after the show. Considering that the people in the show numbered 67, and adding their spouses, the Crowells really had courage-- and we had a lot of fun rehashing. Did you notice that baby spotlight that illuminated the "entrance" to the hospital? It is just what we've been needing, and a gift to the Troupe from Sig Hartell. And did you hear the audience gasp when the streetlight fell over on Friday night? I gasped too, but Mama said afterwards, "Where did the streetlight go?" That's concentration! Non-member friend said the other night, "Why wasn't the one wall of the kitchen finished; didn't you have time?" That's what some people think of daring, originality, and high ART.

See you in two weeks-- hope the bandages are off my typewriter fingers by then.

-E.J.T.